DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 218 644 CS 207 066

AUTHOR Fletcher, Susan Laemmle
TITLE Gracing Our Work: Generating Theory from Writing across the Curriculum.
PUB DATE Dec 81
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Modern Language Association of America (New York, NY, December 27-30, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Cooperation; *Educational Theories; Higher Education; Integrated Activities; *Interdisciplinary Approach; Philosophy; *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS *Writing across the Curriculum

ABSTRACT

Theoretical thinking is needed to help establish writing across the curriculum as a real field and not just a passing fad. The metaphor of the Three Graces--Giving, Receiving, and Returning--suggests a procedure that could generate and sustain both theories and programs. English teachers usually give the initial impetus to cross-curricular programs; they must receive from their students and colleagues in other departments the feedback necessary for shared activity, and they must use the new knowledge gained from this feedback to return to enriched, active giving. And, as with the Graces, on-going processes must occasionally yield to product, to the comtemplation that will help generate the theory that actually perpetuates the whole process. Cross curricular theorizing comes in three forms: (1) "administrative theory," which considers how a cross-curricular writing program should organize itself; (2) "pedagogic theory," which asks specific questions about how writing will be taught; and (3) "speculative theory," which inquires into the two common denominators across fields--mental operations and language. Preliminary reflections on the verb "to be" yield insights not only about writing across the curriculum but about the structure of modern thought and culture. This new perspective is a fine completion, a graceful return, for teachers, students, and the intellectual community as a whole. (JL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED218644

Gracing our Work: Generating Theory from Writing Across the Curriculum

Susan Laemmle Fletcher
UCLA Writing Programs
and UCLA English Department

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Susan Laemmle Fletcher
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

At 1981's MLA Convention, the Division on the Teaching of Writing mounted three panels, panels entitled "Literary Theory and the Teaching of Writing," "Reading Theory and the Teaching of Writing," and "Teaching Writing across the Curriculum." A participant in the last of these, I spoke to the New York audience on the topic of this essay. Only now, months after the event, am I struck by the nonparallelism between the panels' three titles. Only now do I see that my paper covertly aimed to bring writing across the curriculum parallel to reading and literature, that it aimed to fill a theoretical hole. This it did by suggesting how cross-curricular writing programs could produce a widened range of theory. Carrying that paper's locutions into print, I propose to anatomize here the types of theory involved.

To a large extent, I need only categorize work that has already been done. An increasingly ample body of work discusses writing across the curriculum from one slant or

CS207066

another. But, however richly provocative or helpfully directive such writing may be, it often misses self-consciousness about its own methods and about its role, and its horizons are narrower than necessary. Aiming, then, to raise the level of self-consciousness and expand the sense of possibilities, I enter the scholarly conversation which the pioneers--Elaine Maimon, Anne Herrington, Ann Raimes, and others--have set into motion.[1] I shall not propose any one, new enfranchising theory for cross-curricular writing; rather, I want to reflect upon theories already abroad, suggesting both an ordering scheme for them and a procedure whereby their ranks can swell. Ordered growth seems important here; after all, theory and meta-theory distinguish a circumstantial topic from a real field, a discipline. Unless we can think intelligently about the enterprise of the hour, writing across the curriculum, it could go the way of so many passing fads.

I join Elaine Maimon in asserting that "writing across the curriculum is not a fad"--that its basic idea stands "fundamental to teaching at institutions of all sizes and shapes"--but also in recognizing that general agreement over writing's importance often stands light years away from actually establishing a program of writing in the total curriculum (Cinderella," p. 3, "Getting Started," p. 9). That general agreement stands even further away from the developed thought required to sustain newly established writing programs and the newly emergent sub-field of cross-curricular writing.

Let me suggest a procedure that could generate and sustain programs as well as theories. Not fortuitously or fatuously, I hope, it will enter these pages as a metaphor, a metaphor that yokes cross-curricular writing to a mythological motif of ancient vintage: the Three Graces.

I contend that we writing people need to create from our intersections with other departments a circular dance, the kind of dance emblemized by the Graces. That dance, you'll recall, encompasses triple phases--giving, receiving, and returning. You may also recall that Neo-Platonists saw in the Graces' dance a reflection of the universe's triadic rhythm, a rhythm enabling heavenly based benefits to circulate throughout the cosmos. Symbolic of liberality, of mutual charity, the Graces were also seen as unfolding between them the attributes of Venus; thus they served as a suitable metaphor for any unified set of relations that could also divide into three parts.

Their arms intertwined in reciprocal support, the Three Graces represent writing across the curriculum at its best. How so? English instructors usually give an institution-wide writing program its initial impetus. My fellow composition teachers will not need any reminder of giving's extent within the classroom and the office; similarly, in creating a cross-curricular program, we English people may tend towards giving too much, towards a species of hyper-correction.

But imitating the Graces' dance can check our unlimited

giving by linking it to receiving. If we pause to receive from our students and colleagues in other departments, we can set into motion the reciprocal exchange, the graceful sharing indispensible to any humane activity. Having thus paused, we can turn to complete the Graces' circle: we can return to active giving, now enriched by its encounter with other sources of knowledge and power.

Of course, these three stages actually divide no more sharply than do another set of stages with which we're increasingly familiar, in whatever terminology: pre-writing, writing, and revising. We have by now learned to recognize the interconnectedness and recursiveness of steps in the writing process. (The scholarly stages whereby our learning has occurred lie beyond the scope of this paper, even in a footnote, particularly because I am here using the writing process largely as an analogy.) Similarly, we can learn both to anatomize stages in our crossing of the undergraduate curriculum and to synthesize those stages into a productive, continuing process.

The reader will surely have noticed the slide I just took from writing programs to writing process and back again. It was not inadvertant. Let me again agree with Elaine Maimon, this time in suggesting that a process approach--particularly one that implies collaborative learning--should inform cross-curricular planning fully as much as it now informs the individual composition classroom ("Getting

Started," p. 11). Respecting and listening to colleagues and students from other fields forms an indispensible part of any cooperative composition activity. Just as students should flow with their free-writing and then let the written words speak back to them, just as they gain from listening to peer critiques of early drafts, and just as a well-completed paper will knit initial self-expression to attendant awareness of audience and situation--so a flourishing cross-curricular writing program will simultaneously trace a progressive and a recursive process.

The Graces remind us of that ongoing process and also of the indispensible presence of each stage. In whatever order and proportion, successful writers must release words, react to those words, and return those words to the world; in whatever order and proportion, successful teachers must energize their classes, listen to their students, and connect their own experienced insights to student response--at least, they must do all three if they are ever to create that paradoxically transient work-of-art, the memorable class. And finally, in whatever order and proportion, the successful writing administrator will initiate, not a fixed program but stages in a perpetually cyclical process.

And yet, however dynamic unrelenting process may be, it inevitably takes a toll. At some point, I stopped tinkering with this paper. At some point, we hope not always the arbitrary one presented by our deadlines, our students stop

revising and type up their papers. At some point, a writing program announces workshops and classes. These physically consequent events halt process, thus giving participants a much needed sense of achievement, completion, and peace. Such peaceful completion initiates the renewal from which future efforts will spring.

Grateful as I am for the endings that enable new beginnings, I suggest that for writing teachers and administrators substantial renewal requires more than ending one semester or project and moving on to the next. Because our work makes large demands, significant renewal demands our reflecting, writing, theorizing. We need to halt process temporarily in order to contemplate our work and the work of others. Pausing to contemplate, we generate the theory that actually keeps the whole process going.

The Graces, you remember, unfold the attributes of Venus and draw their beneficent energy from her. What theories could stand equal to such an evocative model? Ones that draw their energy from our love of language and its speakers. As I've already intimated, cross-curricular theorizing comes in several forms, forms I'd now like to survey.

First, we have what I will call "administrative theory." Administrative theory considers how a cross-curricular writing program should organize itself. From the generalized idea of writing's place in all fields, it will distill essential ingredients like broadly based committees and a devotion

to general education. Treating the individual campus like a literary text, it will analyze parts and suggest an ideal, harmonious orchestration. Administrative theory may distinguish large schools like UCLA from small ones like Beaver College, or it may connect their similarities; and it certainly should consider, with their theoretical and practical implications, the differences between programs where English instructors go out into other departments to teach adjunct courses, and programs where people from other departments come within English halls (at least metaphorically) for training in composition pedagogy. Thus, theoretically attuned administrators will ask themselves whether they should encourage professors from other disciplines to initiate students into their field's scholarly language; or, alternatively, whether they should rely on English instructors as mediators between another field's rhetoric and its own students.

However this and other such questions get answered, when people from Beaver or UCLA or Hunter College go beyond anecdotal reporting of their experiences, however valuable this too may be, to reflecting on possible ways to organize a cross-curricular writing program, then we have before us fully developed administrative theory.

We can distinguish administrative from what I will call "pedagogic theory" even as the first shades into the second category. Where the first asks, "How shall we organize a campus-wide writing program?" the second pinpoints its

questions: "How shall we teach writing within this particular classroom or discipline?" "How do people in different disciplines learn to write?" "How can students learn to write good reports?" Pedagogic thecrizing probably makes up the bulk of current writing research, whether across the curriculum or otherwise. Supporting either an English-centered or a decentralized cross-curricular writing program, pedagogic theory will consider, for example, what kind of English-department course serves as the surest foundation for a cross-disciplinary writing program; what balance teachers should strike between informal, ungraded writing assignments and formal, polished writing assignments; and how the newly understood writing process can best enter classrooms all across a campus.

Sometimes such pedagogic questioning yields provocative answers. In its pioneering booklet, Learning through Writing, Hunter College urges instructors to "seek out correspondences between what might be called 'the subject process' [of their fields] and 'the writing process.'" In that search, these instructors will need to ask how their subject "comes into being and expresses itself." Armed with a sense of their field's characteristic procedures, they will then be able to show their students "how the manner of proceeding in an essay on a particular subject closely matches the manner of proceeding used by the subject" itself. Building writing into their students' curricular lives as assuredly as it enters

their own professional lives, enlightened instructors will together produce the ideal that is essentially the natural state of affairs--one in which "writing simply becomes business as usual for most of our students in most of their college courses" (pp. 19-21).

Obviously, cross-curricular pedagogy will not always present so comprehensive and harmonious a vision. But whether grand or humble, pedagogic theorizing helps translate administrative structures into actual teaching and, we hope, learning.

That translation supports our most important aim--improved student writing. But, like the perpetual process I spoke of earlier, pedagogic translation can take a toll: pedagogic theory is always tending towards pure practice, sheer nuts and bolts, just as administrative theory moves rapidly from envisioning an ideal program of writing across the curriculum to facing the hard realities of campus politics and budgets. To slow that rapid slide, writing people do well to replenish their intellectual stock with the broad reading and thinking that enlarges imaginative possibilities.

They do well, I believe, to grace their work with a third sort of theorizing, one which I'll call, somewhat redundantly, "speculative theory." Let me speak briefly about the comparative approach characteristic of such thinking and then close with a speculative example of my own.

The Hunter College booklet to which I've already referred

justifies its cross-curricular program and pedagogy thus: "By being taught the intellectual operation of the subject, its modes of analysis, classification, objectivity, and how it speaks, the student learns how to think and write in the subject" (p. 22). A good justification, that; one which brings to bear upon the crucial point, the student's learning, a sophisticated sense of what distinguishes each particular field--its mode of analysis, classification, objectivity, and speech. But after summoning these distinguishing categories, Hunter's pedagogy, like much pedagogic and administrative thinking, releases much of its potential power unchanneled.

While some writing people will want to plan particular classes and some will want to design whole programs, others--or the same people at other moments--ought, I submit, to survey classes, programs, and fields, and then speculate about two common denominators--mental operations and language. If students are to learn the particular patterns of inquiry and the modes of speech in a field, then obviously their teachers will need to bring these patterns and modes to consciousness. Some instructors will want to do this consciousness raising by themselves. But others will be well served by the comparative speculations of composition theorists.

Following the lead of James Kinneavy's Theory of Discourse (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971; rpt. New York: Norton, 1980), these cross-curricular theorists will pose questions to each field: How important is observa-

tion, and how is that observation used? How do general principles and specific situations intersect? What counts as evidence, and how much of it suffices? What expectations does a specialist audience bring to writing in the field, and what formal conventions constrain that writing? Chasing down the answers to such questions may challenge the askers' own powers of observation and generalization. It may lead them deep into foreign waters. And it may not immediately, or ever, pay off in clearly revealing answers. But then again, it may pay off resoundingly.

Anthropological and sociological in its instincts, such theorizing may draw upon linguistics, psychology, philosophy, and history. In danger of thinness and rootlessness, as interdisciplinary work often is, speculative theorizing in composition would combat these dangers by a humble willingness to learn and an acute attention to seemingly given details. Thus, for example, it would ask why science and social science essays virtually demand textual subdivisions while humanities essays of the same length largely eschew them.

Attending to detail, composition theorists would notice even more than they have before, the stylistic, as well as the cognitive differences among fields. They might well organize those differences into recommendations for stylistic pluralism on the part of composition instructors and stylistic range on the part of their students.[2] But they would not

stop there. Rather, they would dwell patiently and lovingly upon styles drawn from various disciplines, perhaps even from different time periods. And then, once again, they would ask questions: What ways of being-in-the-world stand revealed and contrasted in the active and passive voices? Why are personal pronouns now allowed into some scholarly disciplines and not others? How does a field's "stuff"--the animals, rocks, documents, or particles it works upon--relate to its characteristic sentence style?

Answering, or even just asking, these sorts of questions cannot but improve administrative structures and individual classes. It should also enlarge the range of our own writing. Rather than just accepting the conventions and stylistic orthodoxies of various fields, including English, speculative theorists and their readers will anticipate the questions posed by their brightest students, the "why" questions which, thank goodness, still appear.

Earlier, I promised to cap my preview of the comparative approach so useful to speculation with a speculative theory of my own. Not yet refined into full scholarly rigor, my preliminary reflections on the verb "to be" should nonetheless serve several purposes here. Principally, my ruminations on "to be" turn back to exemplify the fruitful, graceful interchange with fields outside English, the interchange of which I spoke earlier; for I came to them after giving writing presentations in a number of different departments.

These presentations usually confronted, among other issues, the stylistic ramifications of various verbs. Current formulation casts Hamlet's query into a new, a stylistic form. Nowadays, English departments lead assaults upon the verb "to be," discovering in its ubiquity a clear sign of the current writing crisis. So Richard Lanham catches us too often "making do with 'is,' the neutral copulative, the weakest verb in the language" (Revising Prose [New York: Scribner's, 1979], p. 1). And Donald Hall warns students to "look out for the verbs be/are/is" (Writing Well [Boston: Little Brown, 3rd ed., 1973], p. 77). These warnings come with good reason. Any stylistically attuned reader has noticed that overuse of "to be" characterizes much of today's worst writing. Moreover, like the legendary golden goose, "is" and her sisters usually pull in train a string of prepositional phrases and nominalizations, yielding such gems as "the reason behind the reality of the situation is the fact that the people of the United States in their heart of hearts are afraid." An exaggeration, admittedly; but of a reality, and one that gathers force daily.

My colleagues and I in the UCLA Writing Programs teach student writers how to unearth an active verb hiding under many a weak sentence's loam. In our lessons, we use Lanham's Revising Prose or Revising Business Prose (as well as the videotape and computer program based upon these), Joseph Williams' tactics for revising nominalizations (in his Style:

Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace [Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1981], chap. 2), and whatever else we find helpful. Diagnosing what he calls "the official style," Lanham offers his "Paramedic Method" of revision in hopes of prolonging the writer-patient's life until a lasting cure arrives. That cure, he submits, requires a "mature and reflective training in verbal self-awareness" (p. viii).

That mature and reflective training ought, among other things, to explain whether and when our prose should be or not be. It ought to offer understanding of how we moderns could have strayed so far from the great English prose styles anchoring themselves in the copulative verb: Ecclesiastes' "The race is not to the swift"; Bacon's "Revenge is a kind of wild justice"; Newman's "Knowledge is one thing, virtue is another"; Dickens' "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Lacking that understanding, as teachers we may urge our students to shun "is" and "was" while simultaneously assigning them prose models that trumpet the forceful possibilities of these small words. And as writing consultations to other departments, we may make stylistic recommendations that lack the credibility bestowed by a reasoned sophistication. When the more observant among our listeners question us, we can only fall back upon evasion or authority--tactics possible, although finally ineffective, with captive freshmen, but ludicrously impossible with people rooted in other fields.

Carrying writing across the curriculum may, then, cause us problems. But looking at other fields may also encourage enlarged speculation. Among the gifts received from other departments, as from students generally, may come scepticism about our own accepted doctrines. Casting about in the midst of sceptical queries, I discovered that the style manuals of the American Psychological Association and the Council of Biology Editors urge aspiring authors to abjure the formerly esteemed, the dispassionate passive voice (a special case of "to be") and instead invest themselves in active verbs. And the Style Guide for Chemists counsels its users to choose verbs of action and limit verbs of existence.[3]

More surprisingly and tellingly, I discovered that science editors and composition instructors share their scepticism about being with a leading psychoanalytic theorist. Roy Schafer's A New Language for Psychoanalysis (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1976) proposes "action language" as the "native tongue of psychoanalysis." Analysts who encourage their patients to speak that language can, Schafer maintains, better help those patients assume responsible agency for their own actions, the first stage in their acting differently. Thus analysts will say "You move lethargically," rather than "you are lethargic," and their patients will learn to say, "I react with unconscious anxiety," rather than "I was anxious for some reason." Confident that a different language can shape a different reality, Schafer in effect joins composition

people by urging restricted use of linking verbs. (See chapters 1 and 16 especially.)

English, Biology, Psychology--we begin to perceive a clear trend towards verb, as opposed to noun, style. In the humanities, sciences and social sciences; business, medicine, and law, the push towards a lively, verb-driven style slowly gains momentum. That push may demonstrate the influence of English specialists, but it also demonstrates our age's love of process; yes, the same love that enabled us to rediscover the writing process, the same love that led me into the Graces' dance. Where, then, does that forceful trend leave the static, nominal style of Genesis: "And there was evening and there was morning, the first day"?

Let me present the beginnings of a reconciling theory, one that can support revision exercises from noun to verb style even in the face of Newman and Dickens and the Bible; a speculative theory that will encourage administrative range, pedagogic sensitivity, and further research. Swiftly stated at this point, modern writers should curtail their use of "to be" because contemporary life does not yield the shared sense of being, the convinced certainty about philosophic essences that its effectively sustained use demands. The scientific and philosophic shift from a delimited, finally known, positivist reality to an evolving, particularized and personalized one shows itself on the microscopic level of the sentence.

Reflecting upon her survey of historical trends in English prose style, Josephine Miles remarks that perhaps "the power of verbs is now returning, in poetry as in prose, because now neither concept, quality, emotion, nor object is the bearer of significance, so much as is the human treatment of them, the action upon them" (Style and Proportion: The Language of Prose and Poetry [Boston: Little, Brown, 1967], p. 108). She roots the predicative style characteristic of the Elizabethans and of us in an attitude embracing "active on-going process" (pp. 111-12). Similarly, the classicist Eric Havelock has traced the culturally and intellectually decisive turn from Homer's temporally rooted and concretized verb style to Plato's universilizing and idealizing noun style, a noun style dependent upon the verb "to be." (See Preface to Plato [New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1967; rpt. 1971], pp. 181-83 and passim; The Greek Concept of Justice: From Its Shadow in Homer to Its Substance in Plato [Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978], chap. 13 and passim.) Acknowledging "to be's" usefulness for philosophy, Otto Jespersen nonetheless asserts that the nominal style "does not lend itself so well to the purposes of everyday life" (The Philosophy of Grammar [New York: Norton, 1965], p. 139).[4]

Rather than delving further into causes and effects and thus skewing intolerably this essay's developing argument, let me simply assert my belief that I've tapped something important, even if slippery: the shift from a stable and

unified view of the world to one which sees elusive particulars in constant process, and the tracings that shift has left in prose specimens and especially in prose standards. I believe that this shift is stronger than the official style, with its weak verbs, abstract nouns, and prepositional phrases. (Yes, I know, that sentence contains "is"; but notice, if you choose to, how few of its neighbors do.) And I believe that once a word, in this case "is" or "was," has been leeched of its meaning, single individuals cannot revivify it.

Existing as we do in a universe of discourse, taking verbal cues from other writers and from strong cultural currents, we and our students cannot unilaterally animate our writing with "to be" forms. Reanimation of the copulative verb would require weightier nouns than those standing at our disposal today, especially when we talk across fields. Within the enclosed domains of particular fields, practitioners may agree on essences, naming them in the abstract nouns of their current jargon. But once people cross fields, shared and assumed meaning evaporates and only asserted, personalized meaning can prevail. Across disciplines, our lack of a stable and shared culture makes it hard to write a resonant nominal style.

Qualifications, of course, arise. In his recent book, Joseph Williams acknowledges that "some nominalizations name abstract ideas that we can express only in a nominalization:

Freedom, death, love, despair, hope, life, wisdom. If we couldn't turn some verbs or adjectives into nouns, we would find it difficult--perhaps impossible--to discuss subjects that have preoccupied us for millennia" (Style, p. 19). Some nominalizations, then, still exist sturdy enough to uphold sentences with "was"; charged enough to generate electric metaphors and precise definitions across "is." But mostly, to take Williams' example, our students write, "There has been a demand for an end to taxation on entertainment," and we must teach them to revise that into "we demand that the government not tax entertainment" (p. 19).

The verb "to be" must die before it can live again. Its current limbo state restricts effective use. And so, writing today we do best (following Hall, p. 76) to "strike, soothe, grin, cry, exasperate, decline, fly, hurt, and heal"--sometimes, granted, in metaphoric senses. Until Western culture has rediscovered essences amidst the particulars, we cannot simply be happy, creative, or disinterested in our writing, at least not often, at least not if we want readers attending to what we say.

These prolonged speculations on "to be" come from my having experienced the Graces' first two movements--giving and receiving. As I've taught writing across the UCLA campus, I have learned to scrutinize a field's language to decide whether it requires "is" and "was"; when nominalizations and "to be" indicate mature style and clear, abstract thinking,

and when these features attempt to cover an absence of committed thought or hide a significant action; where an active verb could communicate more forcefully than "to be" without sacrificing anything important.

This sort of scrutinizing moves well in partnership with members of the particular clan involved. Pressing and negotiating back and forth, cross-curricular partnership yields a fine result: a justified, polished professional language, one that retains the respect of fellow professionals while also communicating well with members of other professions. Meeting across a page of prose, composition folk and people from other fields have a lot to say and a lot to learn. The others learn to justify, maybe to change, their common mode of expression.

For us, the gains loom even larger. As a result of cross-curricular exchange and reading, I began to speculate on the social and psychological implications of language use; the vagueries of "to be" present only one instance of possible speculations. As field after field refines its language and becomes self-conscious about its procedures, students, instructors, and writing programs all benefit. Thus, administrative, pedagogic, and speculative theory come together.

Understanding what different fields and different periods gain and lose from particular language maneuvers enables us to complete the Graces' circle with a flourish: we can return to

our students, to our own English departments, and to the intellectual community as a whole, an amplified, sophisticated, exciting body of knowledge. Moreover, attending to the cognitive and linguistic styles of various fields gives composition people a fruitful area of humanistic scholarship--something they need, I submit, to continue teaching well. That scholarship will grow out of their practical experience, their teaching; and it will return bounty back upon that practice. For composition to have more than a purely service relationship to other disciplines, writing teachers and administrators must also function as observers, adaptors, and theorists.

Notes

[1] I have drawn especially upon: (1) Elaine Maimon's Writing in the Arts and Sciences (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop, 1981); "Talking to Strangers," CCC, 30 (December 1979), 364-69; "Cinderella to Hercules: Demythologizing Writing Across the Curriculum," Journal of Basic Writing, 2 (Spring/ Summer 1980), 3; "Writing in all the Arts and Sciences: Getting Started and Gaining Momentum," WPA: Writing Program Administration, 4, No. 3 (Spring 1981), 9-13. (2) Anne Herrington's "Writing to Learn: Writing Across the Disciplines," CE, 43, No. 4 (April, 1981), 379-87. (3) Anne Raimes' "Writing and Learning Across the Curriculum: The Experience of a Faculty Seminar," CE, 41, No. 7 (March 1980), 797-801; and the Hunter booklet she co-authored with Charles Persky: Learning Through Writing: A Practical Guide to Student Writing for College Teachers (available from the College's Division of Humanities and Arts). (4) Randall R. Freisinger's "Cross-Disciplinary Writing Workshops: Theory and Practice," CE, 42, No. 2 (October 1980), 154-66. (5) David Hamilton's "Interdisciplinary Writing," CE, 41, No. 7 (March 1980), 780-801.

[2] My colleague, Mike Rose, pursues these recommendations and other ideas relevant to my purposes here in "When Faculty Talk about Writing," CE, 41, No. 3 (November 1979), 272-79.

[3] See the Council of Biology Editors Style Manual: A Guide for Authors, Editors, and Publishers in the Biological Sciences, ed. Edward J. Huth and the CBE Style Manual Committee (Arlington, Va.: Council of Biology Editors, 1978, 4th ed.), pp. 20-21; the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Garamond/ Pridemark Press, 1974, rpt. 1979), p. 28; and the Style Guide for Chemists, by Louis Fieser and Mary Fieser (Huntington, N.Y.: Krieger, 1972), pp. 10-12. Of course, many other style manuals await our perusal. The swelling numbers of unofficial writing books directed at professionals of every stripe, while too numerous to survey here, do largely support the ideas I develop. See, for example, Lester S. King, M.D., Why Not Say It Clearly: A Guide to Scientific Writing (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), pp. 23-33; Richard C. Wydick, "Plain English for Lawyers," California Law Review, 66, No. 4 (July 1978), 727-65; H. J. Tichy, Effective Writing for Engineers, Managers, Scientists (New York: Wiley, 1966), pp. 122-26 and 190-96.

[4] For a discussion of the rhetoric of the social sciences and also the significance of various parts of speech, see

Richard Weaver, The Ethics of Rhetoric (Chicago: Regnery, 1953), pp. 187-201, 127-29, and 127-29 particularly; for a linguistic account of the noun-verb relationship, see A. Meillet, The Comparative Method in Historical Linguistics, trans. G. B. Ford (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1966), p. 114; for a forceful defense of verb style, see Richard A. Lanham, Style: An Anti-textbook (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1974), p. 73 and passim; for a discussion of Coleridge's views on "language as a single power, beginning in a primal word, which splits off into polar forces of verb and noun," see Michael Kent Havens, "Coleridge on the Evolution of Language," Studies in Romanticism, 20 (Summer 1981), 171 and passim; and for two thoughtful caveats on the pitfalls of verb style see Joseph Williams, "Non-Linguistic Linguistics and the Teaching of Style," in Donald McQuade, ed., Linguistics and the Teaching of Composition (New York: n.p., 1979), pp. 24-40, and (with Rosemary L. Hake) "Style and Its Consequences," CE, 43, No. 5 (September 1981), pp. 433-51.